tonnes of foodgrains were held by the Food Corporation of India in open storage due to lack of adequate covered storage capacity.

(b) and (c) Food Corporation of India has taken the following steps in order to protect its stocks in open storage from rains:—

(i) stocks are stored under cover-and-plinth (CAP) arrangement with proper drainage and dunnage;

(ii) stocks are covered with polythene covers and lashed with nylon ropes;

(iii) aeration of stocks in the open is undertaken during clear weather to maintain the health of grains; and

(iv) periodic inspection is undertaken to control insect infestation, damage by rodents, birds etc.

Procurement of Wheat

404. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that procurement of wheat by Government from farmers continues till middle of June every year whereas the purchasing was stopped about 15—20 days earlier this year;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the procurement price of wheat in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh had thus dropped drastically from Rs. 157 to Rs. 145 per quintal resulting in great loss to the farmers;

(d) whether Government propose to enquire into the reasons for which procurement of wheat by the Government of India had stopped 20 days earlier; and

(e) if not, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (RAO BIRENDRA SINGH): (a), (b), (d) and (e). The Rabi Marketing Season is from the first of April to the end of March, during which wheat procurement takes place. In the current season, procurement of wheat under price support is still continuing.

(c) The procurement/support price of 'Fair Average Quality' wheat, which is uniform throughout the country, has been Rs. 157 per quintal since the commencement of the current season, and farmers are free to sell their wheat to the procuring agencies at that price.

Central Assistance for drought in States

405. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that serious drought situation is prevailing in various States in the country due to the failure of rains during the period from April 1985 to June 1985;

(b) what is the estimated loss of the crops which have been destroyed/damaged as a result thereof; and

(c) whether the Central Government have provided any relief to the drought affected States and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI CHANDULAL CHANDRAKAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The States of Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra reported drought conditions during the period April to June, 1985.

(b) According to the Governments of the above States, 105.48 lakh hectares of cropped area have been affected in varying degrees due to drought conditions in these States.

(c) A ceiling of Central assistance of Rs. 181.71 crores has been sanctioned to these states except Himachal Pradesh. The report of central team on drought in Himachal Pradesh is being processed.